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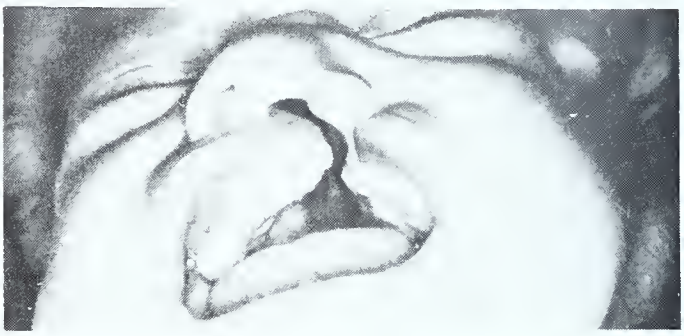
cleft lip and cleft palate

PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
DIVISION OF MATERNAL
AND CHILD HEALTH
CLEFT PALATE PROGRAM

CLEFT LIP and CLEFT PALATE CAN BE CORRECTED!

WHAT IS CLEFT LIP?



Note the picture of the baby. Before she was born the flesh that formed her upper lip failed to unite properly, forming a cleft lip. Sometimes this is called hare-lip.

Sometimes only one side of the lip is involved, and sometimes both sides are affected, as shown below.

WHAT IS CLEFT PALATE?

Just as the flesh of the lip failed to unite, the flesh of the roof of the mouth may not come together. The abnormal opening (or hole) in the roof of the mouth is called cleft palate.

Cleft palate is often associated with cleft lip, as shown below, but may occur without cleft lip.

DO YOU KNOW?

Statistics reveal about one child in 750 is born with a cleft lip and cleft palate. Extensive experience in treating children with this problem and its related dental and speech problems reveals that with appropriate clinical and parental help these children can develop into normal, happy, productive individuals.

WHY DID IT OCCUR?

Research has demonstrated that factors including nutritional deficiencies, infections and various drugs may be causative factors. Many investigators feel there is sometimes a hereditary factor in the formation of cleft palate. It is nothing of which to be ashamed. In certain families there is probably an inherited tendency to this deformity, but it is not the result of any disease.

THE PROBLEMS IT CAUSES

The major problems encountered are in appearance, speech, dental malformations, hearing and ear infections. There is no evidence that a child with a cleft palate has a lower I. Q. than any other child.

THE CORRECTIVE MEASURES

Plastic surgery, dental care, mental and speech training have worked modern miracles in helping persons with cleft lip and cleft palate to live normal lives. Sometimes as early as three weeks after an operation for cleft lip, it is difficult to believe that the patient is the same person. Surgery on the cleft lip should be performed at an early age – from six weeks to three months after birth, according to the general physical condition. Surgery on the cleft palate should be done, as a general rule, at a time early enough to forestall bad speech habits, sometimes as early as eighteen months, but sometimes not for two or three years after birth. Thus, in case of cleft palate alone, with no lip involvement, no treatment of the cleft is begun during the first year.

It would be wonderful if closure of the palate by surgery sufficed in all cases, but this is true only in a certain proportion of cases, and indeed surgery may be useless where the cleft is wide. Here, it is evident that services other than surgery are required; they comprise dental rehabilitation including orthodontia (tooth straightening) and prosthesis (artificial appliances for replacing missing teeth and closure of clefts of the palate), and speech training.

It is obvious that this complete service is often beyond the means of families with limited incomes.

HOW TO OBTAIN SERVICES

Physicians, dentists, nurses, school officials, and welfare and other agencies are requested to report cleft lip or cleft palate children to the State Cleft Palate Program, Pennsylvania Department of Health, Harrisburg.

Several clinics throughout the State, which were organized by private, local groups, are utilized by the Department of Health for the provision of diagnostic and treatment services to children with cleft lip and cleft palate. The services of these facilities are purchased on a fee for service basis.

Once admitted to a clinic, the child will be given a complete examination by a team consisting of a surgeon, a pediatrician, dental specialists, a speech pathologist, a psychologist and an otolaryngologist. The treatment program for the child will be developed by this team of specialists planning and working together.

Any individual may obtain care from these clinics on a private basis. The State Cleft Palate Program is committed to financially assisting some families in acquiring services where the provision of such services poses undue hardships or is beyond the means of the family.

(Photographs furnished through the courtesy of the Lancaster Cleft Palate Clinic, Inc.)

For Further Information Contact:

Pennsylvania Department of Health
Division of Maternal and Child Health
Cleft Palate Program
P. O. Box 90
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Clinics approved by the Departr
Health for the diagnosis and treatment
lip and cleft palate are located at seve
venient points in the State.

Allegheny General Hospital, Cleft Pala
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Allentown Cleft Palate Clinic
Allentown, Pa.

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
Clinic for Cleft Palate and Allied Co
Philadelphia, Pa.

Lancaster Cleft Palate Clinic
Lancaster, Pa.

Northwestern Penna. Cleft Palate Instit
Erie, Pa.

Philipsburg Cleft Palate Clinic
Philipsburg, Pa.

Pittsburgh Diagnostic Cleft Palate Grou
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Reading Cleft Palate Clinic
Reading, Pa.

St. Christopher's Hospital for Children
Cleft Palate Clinic
Philadelphia, Pa.

Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Cleft Palate Clir
Kingston, Pa.

Williamsport Cleft Palate Clinic
Williamsport, Pa.

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